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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today's opening prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, the Reverend Adam Briddell, associate pastor of the Asbury United Methodist Church, right here in Washington, DC.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Holy God, You are a stronghold for the oppressed, a fortress in times of trouble. The heavens are the work of Your fingers. You established the Moon and the stars. Who are we, that You care for us? Who are we, that You promise us grace and mercy?

May Your greatness humble us. May Your light transform us. May Your love inspire us.

Inspire us to great acts of mercy, kindness, and justice. Inspire us to love You and love our neighbor. Inspire us to labor for the sake of Your Kingdom, to sacrifice for the least and the lost.

Today may the men and women of this great Chamber be found faithful to You.

This we pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The majority leader is recognized.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, deep in shadow, there is a specter that haunts our country. In dark corners it claims thousands of victims every year—quietly, stealthily, maliciously. It is hard for many Americans to believe that human trafficking could happen where they live, but it does, right here in the United States—in all 50 of our States. And many of these victims are children.

In Kentucky alone the Commonwealth has been able to identify more than 100 victims since it began keeping relevant records in 2013. While this kind of abuse often begins around the age of 13 or 14, there have been reports of victims in Kentucky as young as 2 months old. It is just about the most morally offensive thing you can imagine.

These victims need a voice, they need justice, and the new Congress is determined to give them both. That is just what the bill we are considering this week, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, aims to do.

I particularly want to thank Senator CORNYN for his hard work on this legislation. He has been a tireless advocate for it. I also want to note that this legislation has always been a bipartisan exercise. I want to thank the 13 Democratic cosponsors of the bill.

It is a bill that received a hearing in the Judiciary Committee earlier this year and was reported without a single negative vote. It has been thoroughly vetted and carefully crafted, which explains its bipartisan support in the Senate. That also explains the long list of endorsements outside the Senate, with organizations such as Shared Hope International, Rights4Girls, the Fraternal Order of Police, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children among its many supporters.

Here is what one of the broad coalitions backing this bill had to say about it. "The Justice for Victims of Traf-

ficking Act provides unprecedented support to domestic victims of trafficking, who are too often invisible and underserved," they wrote. "This legislation is vital."

I hope now that it has been brought to the floor, this bill continues to enjoy its strong record of constructive bipartisan support. It is similar to a measure that was passed by the House of Representatives.

The version before us also contains some additional provisions as well. For instance, Senator PORTMAN has offered ideas to improve the way we find missing kids and to strengthen law enforcement efforts to investigate and prosecute those who commit sex trafficking crimes.

It is good to see such a strong and bipartisan piece of legislation because victims of human trafficking should be treated as victims—not as criminals—because they should have the services and resources they need to rebuild their lives and because law enforcement should have the tools it needs to protect them and to combat these crimes. This bill aims to ensure these things actually happen, and I look forward to the Senate's good work to pass it.

REMEMBERING EDWARD W. BROOKE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, later today a former Senate colleague will be honored at the National Cathedral and laid to rest in Arlington. Senator Brooke was a trailblazer. He was a model of honesty and courage in office. Through his example, Edward W. Brooke reminded Americans that anything was possible in their country. In the years since Senator Brooke left office, we have seen the truth of that statement.

So while I am sure the Brooke family will mourn a man they loved today, just as any family would, I hope those who loved Senator Brooke can remember they have a lot to be proud of, too,

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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